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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the success of the Boston (Massachusetts) Compact's business and public education agreements over the years 1985 through 1987. The Compact began in 1982 as a citywide public school improvement program. Business, university, and trade union leaders agreed to establish and meet measurable admission and hiring goals to increase youth employment and higher education opportunities. The Boston Public Schools agreed to improve student achievement, attendance, and graduation rates, as well as the quality of education they provided. Five years later, the business sector had met or exceeded all of its goals, while none of the school district's goals had been achieved. The first section, "The Business Community and the Schools," deals with the business community's role in the Compact and the circumstances that encouraged businesses to become more active in the city's education affairs. The second section, "The Compact and the School Department," considers the school department's efforts to improve the schools and the difficulties encountered. A third section, "The Compact in the Schools," looks at the Compact from the perspective of staff members of two of the city's 17 high schools. The final section offers an analysis of the Compact's accomplishments and its prospects for school improvement. A list of 19 footnotes is included. The appendices include a description of the Boston Compact Agreement, and a discussion of the research method employed in writing the paper. (FMW)

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The Business Community and School Reform:
The Boston Compact at Five Years

Introduction

On September 10, 1986, the Boston business community held a press conference at the Old Massachusetts State House to announce that the New England Mutual Life Insurance Company had contributed $6 million to a program that would guarantee financial aid to all graduates of the Boston Public Schools who get into college and then provide them with jobs when they finish their educations. In announcing the new venture, Edward E. Phillips, chairman of New England Life and one of the program's main backers said, "Our goal is that no graduate of the Boston public school system who's admitted to college shall be unable to go because of (a lack of) financial resources." John McElwee, chairman of John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company and chairman of the Boston Private Industry Council, said that "What business is saying (to students) is 'finish high school and go to college, and we'll help you with your tuition expenses and your employment at graduation.' It's that simple."

ACCESS, as the new program was called, became a national news story as well as a public relations coup for Boston business. The announcement was front page news that day in the N.Y.Times and the Wall Street Journal. U.S.A.Today bannered the program as a "Super Deal: College, Job for Every Kid;" details were provided on NBC and CBS prime time news that night. In Washington, U.S. Education Secretary William J. Bennett commended ACCESS as

a national model for other cities to follow. Mary Futrell, president of the National Education Association, the nation's largest teachers union, called the program "a powerful message sent to young people to stay in school." And back in Boston, Mayor Ray Flynn announced ACCESS "a monumental action" and the chairman of the Boston School Committee called it "a godsend." Boston Public Schools superintendent Laval S. Wilson said, "I can think of no city in the country that has this kind of support from the business community. I am blessed as a superintendent."

ACCESS was a spin-off of the Boston Compact, the first in a series of initiatives the Boston business and education communities had undertaken to try to improve the education and job prospects of the city's youngsters. Started in 1982, the Compact was a citywide public school improvement program that had attracted much attention nationwide as a set of promising approaches for dealing with the problems that prevented urban youth from graduating from high school and either getting a job or going to college. The Compact worked through a set of mutual promises. Boston business, university and trade union leaders had signed agreements with the Boston Public Schools to establish and meet measurable admission and hiring goals toward increasing youth employment and higher education opportunities. In return, the school department pledged to improve student achievement, attendance and graduation rates as well as the quality of education provided by the schools.(1) The Compact's strategy of building a public accountability into the agreement by establishing measurable goals for all partners made it unique, easy to monitor, and enormously appealing.

The Compact was barely up and running in 1982 when business began exceeding its goals for permanent and part-time job placements. Several

major corporations established an endowed fund for education, The Boston Plan for Excellence, and in six months won pledges of $5 million from several hundred local companies. Robert Spillane, then the new school superintendent, laid off 1200 teachers and replaced nearly half the high school headmasters in a bold strike that stunned a city more used to school chiefs that accommodated the unions. He also launched district-wide school-based management and improvement programs based on the latest ideas for improving urban education.

This paper offers an account of the Boston Compact and its progeny, The Boston Plan for Excellence. The paper examines how the Compact's business and public education agreements have fared over the past two years, 1985-1987, a period that saw a change in school district administration and the departure or reassignment of several people who played key roles in the Compact's early years.(2) The paper's first section, The Business Community and the Schools, deals with the business community's role in the Compact and the circumstances that encouraged businesses to become more active in the city's education affairs. A second section, The Compact and the School Department, considers the school department's progress toward improving the schools and the difficulties encountered. A third section looks more closely at the Compact from the perspective of people who work in two of the city's seventeen high schools.(3) The final section offers an analysis of the Compact's accomplishments and its prospects for improving Boston's high schools.

The Business Community and the Schools

The evolution of the Boston business community from a cautious partner in 1982 to a major force in the school district five years later was hardly

a foregone conclusion. The conditions in Boston were right for forging the initial Boston Compact agreement: education and business had worked together reasonably well for seven years under the school de-segregation order; business leaders had confidence in the new superintendent Robert Spillane; a successful summer and school year jobs program had shown the business community that Boston youngsters were indeed employable; and leadership in the superintendent's office, several major Boston firms, and city agencies -- all the key actors -- were on board.

Over the next several years, some changes materialized: the admired superintendent left town; school politics became more contentious as the size of the school committee increased from five to thirteen; leadership changed hands in the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC) which might have redirected business's agenda; a new mayor was elected; and several people involved in the Compact's design and early success moved on to other positions. Several of these changes created organizational and political problems for the Compact. But after three years, it had developed sufficient momentum that problems that would have derailed a less popular program seemed relatively inconsequential. The Compact seemed to be thriving.

To many, the business community's willingness to become more involved with the public schools was directly linked to the success of the Compact's several youth employment programs which the PIC had organized. "It showed business that many of them were serious about organizing, and that they had an organization -- the PIC -- that could deliver," said William J. Spring, vice president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and one of the small group that hatched the Compact idea. The PIC's Summer Jobs Program, which

was the piece of the Compact that first demonstrated the potential for a partnership linking jobs and education grew at a rapid pace from the start. It increased from 202 companies hiring 852 students in 1983, the Compact's first year, to 614 companies hiring 2,591 students in 1986, to 3,010 students hired by 669 companies in 1987. The year-round Job Collaborative Program, which is staffed by a full-time PIC employee in each school who tracks down job placements, counsels students and places them in jobs, grew from 274 students in three high schools in 1982 to 1,200 students in 14 of the city's 14 comprehensive high schools in 1987.

The priority hiring of Boston high school graduates, which was the third jobs program devised by the Compact and managed by the PIC, resulted in 415 hires in 1983, the program's first year. The PIC recruited 316 companies to hire 607 graduates of the class of 1984. Three hundred six companies hired 823 graduates of the class of 1985; and 967 of the 1986 graduating class were hired by 364 companies into permanent positions. According to Jim Darr, PIC executive director from 1982 to summer 1987, the PIC had recruited about as many jobs as it had students needing help finding them. In fall 1986, he said that "with the class of 1985 and certainly with the class of 1986, I think we've reached a point where we can say that every Boston high school graduate can either go on to college or can get a job. That is probably the outstanding achievement of the Compact, and maybe the Compact itself will never be able to achieve more."

The PIC's ability to deliver a successful jobs program was evidence that the business community had a competent agent to orchestrate its dealings with the schools and the city. Even more important, the PIC's success in working with the school department showed executives that they

could get involved in education through the Compact without getting swamped in school politics, which Dan Morley, vice president of the State Street Bank observed was a "hang-up in the past." The PIC also was successful in educating business about education, which it did by drawing a stark picture of the city's demographics and their implications for the schools and for corporate futures. Over a period of several decades following World War II, the city and its economy had undergone major changes. It had virtually eliminated the demand for unskilled labor and increased the need for employees who could work in white collar, service oriented settings. The school district of the 1950s and 1960s could begin to meet that new demand, but then changed quickly and dramatically during the next two decades. The loss of middle and working class white students from the district during a period of suburban expansion and the stormy school desegregation fight altered the composition of the schools' clientele to those who were predominately poor, black, Hispanic and Asian, and frequently recent arrivals to this country. Sixty percent of Boston's 58,000 public school students now come from families receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Three-quarters of the students live in single parent or foster homes, and almost half live in public housing. While the school system in 1972 enrolled 110,000 students of whom 75% were white, by 1987 it had "tipped" to 50% black, 18% hispanic, 7% Asian and 25% white students. Moreover, although enrollment had declined by 45% in the past 15 years, the number of public school dropouts had steadily risen, from about 2,000 during 1980-81 to over 3,000 during 1984-85.(4)

College attendance and graduation rates were nearly as troubling as the high school dropout rates. Northeastern University, a private university in Boston that accepts more Boston high school graduates than any other college in the city reported two years ago that only 10% of its Boston students graduate despite generous financial aid and retention services. Boston University, whose admissions standards are generally higher, retains nearly 50% of its Boston students. Still, "it's pretty depressing to consider the number who enter (college) and the number who leave with credentials needed to lead a middle class life," Jim Darr observed.

Business commitment to education grew commensurate with knowledge of such disappointing statistics. "CEO's sitting on the PIC Board heard about demographics on a regular basis, heard and understood that the people out there are our future employees and that we have to be more involved in their training and preparation. People became more sophisticated about issues of the underclass and the practical problems they present," Dan Morley said. Social responsibility and self-interest combined with bad news about the schools increased the business community's desire to do something. "The commitment of the business community has been heightened, regardless of how one assesses the Compact's progress," William Edgerly, chairman of the State Street Bank and founding chair of the PIC, believes. "Now the business community thinks it's more important than ever to support the schools."

The Boston Plan for Excellence

In the past three years, business support has diversified to include greater involvement in school district management and governance issues;

business has also raised over $10 million for The Boston Plan for Excellence in the Public Schools, a permanent fund managed by The Boston Foundation to support innovative teaching programs in kindergarten through high school, and counseling and financial aid assistance for prospective college students.

The Plan for Excellence was established in 1984 with a gift of $1.5 million from the Bank of Boston on the occasion of its 200th anniversary. According to Ken Rossano, vice president of the bank, it decided to give the anniversary gift to education because "there was great controversy and distress about the issue of education at the time." In a series of breakfast meetings that included Patricia Albjerg Graham, dean of Harvard's Graduate School of Education and Harold Howe II and Frank Keppel, senior staff there who are both former U.S. Commissioners of Education, a group hammered out plans for an endowed program to which other corporations would be encouraged to give. Income from The Bank of Boston's fund provides grants in the $2,500 to $10,000 range for teacher initiated innovative learning projects at all grade levels.

Shortly after The Plan for Excellence was established, the Bank of New England gave a $300,000 grant that provides stipends to about sixty elementary school teachers annually to attend innovative teaching institutes. More recently, the John Hancock Financial Services Company gave The Plan $1 million for small grants to Boston's middle schools to improve instruction in basic skills and to expand their intramural athletics programs. In February 1987, a $1 million gift was given by the partners of one of Boston's most prestigious law firms, Goodwin, Procter

and Hoar, to support early childhood education programs and teacher training.

The New England's $1 million gift for the ACCESS scholarship program was the most highly publicized grant to the Plan. New England Chairman Ted Phillips knew that ACCESS would need a lot more than $1 million to meet the financial needs of Boston's largely poor and working class students. With help from the Boston Chamber of Commerce, he subsequently raised it from The Boston Foundation, which gave him $1 million to be matched by other contributions; The Vault, Boston's most exclusive CEO organization, whose 25 members' firms gave another $1 million dollars; the Higher Education Assistance Corporation which added another $1 million; and from more than 100 additional local firms.

In a brief period of time the Boston business community, which has long had a reputation for philanthropic stinginess, broke records for generosity to its public schools. Several circumstances encouraged this change of heart and helped education to become the main beneficiary. For one thing, big corporate profits in recent years had made gift-giving easier for business to sell to stockholders and board members. And several major corporate anniversaries provided the right occasion to publicly acknowledge the city where these firms had thrived. In addition, after years of racial discord and political controversy, urban education had become a safe and popular corporate cause embraced by a growing number of national and international corporations. By the mid-1980s, education had become a platform for corporate leadership and visibility. Finally, the Plan for Excellence gave business a funding mechanism that would secure gifts from the school department's control. Corporations could manage

their programs and avoid the political process that characterized resource allocation in the school department.

Boston's corporate education initiatives have attracted much attention, but have also created a certain amount of tension among the Compact partners. One observer noted that "a number of companies wish to lay claim to the Compact and their having a key role in making it happen" -- a push for recognition that has generated considerable publicity for some companies while barely acknowledging the work of other partners. One Compact insider noted ruefully that ACCESS was "basically a new wrinkle on an old (Compact) story," but that ACCESS's sponsor had hired an ad agency to attract national media attention. "We got the kind of press we got from the Compact with no marketing," he said.

Local colleges involved in the Higher Education Partnership are also unhappy about the clamor over business when for years they've been providing far greater amounts of scholarship money and teacher in-service training. Robert Sperber special assistant to the President of Boston University and director of the Partnership pointed out that Boston colleges and universities gave $3.3 million in scholarships to Boston students in 1986, whereas ACCESS gave out only $350,000. Indeed, in 1986, Boston area colleges gave over $7 million in scholarships and free staff training, curriculum development, facilities use and other pro bono services to students and the school department. Over the past four years, their contributions have totaled over $25 million. Sperber believes that "the enormous publicity that has gone to the business community has created an imbalance as to what the Compact means. It seems as though business is

the only partner." Sperber and others see this as a serious problem for the partnership.

But some people are also concerned that the realities of public education in Boston are being ignored in the corporate public relations sweepstakes that are now underway, that the business community has become so "overinvested" in the school system's success that it sees success where only hope and a few modest improvements reside. They fear that the main purpose of the Compact agreement -- to improve the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms -- has been lost in the rush to celebrate what the business community has done for the schools. "Someone announced that $13 million has been raised for the Plan and that Boston has a handle on school problems the way no other city in the country does," one business executive reported. "That makes me very nervous....At some point, we may not have a superintendent, we may have more turmoil in the schools, and we're going to look embarrassed with a number of business communities saying 'we thought Boston solved all those problems', because we haven't."

At the same time, the business community's contributions to the schools cannot and should not be minimized. In the past five years, it has raised more than $10 million in endowments, provided teachers and administrators with resources they wouldn't have had otherwise, and made jobs and college support available to every student in the system.

Boston business has also done what businesses in other major cities have tried for over a decade -- to drastically reduce the black youth unemployment rate. To put Boston's success in context, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in October 1985, the national unemployment rate for June 1985 high school graduates was 19.8% and 50.3% for white and

black graduates respectively. A more useful measure that includes the entire cohort, including those not officially searching for work and thus not considered officially unemployed (but including the college bound)--the employment/population ratio -- produces more discouraging but meaningful results nationwide. In March 1986, 49% of 1985 graduates in large U.S. central cities were employed and 33.6% of black members.(5)

In Boston, the PIC conducts a telephone search for June graduates the following fall and in 1985, reached nearly 80%. Half were going on to further schooling. The survey also found that 59% were employed, a higher fraction than for other large cities analyzed. For blacks, it was 60%, nearly double the national average. Moreover, the gap between black and white employment rates was far lower: two percentage points in Boston as against 25 percentage points separating whites from blacks in other cities.(6)

These results were partly due to Massachusetts' strong economy, where in 1985 the unemployment rate was 3.9% for all adults, 5.3% for black adults and 18.2% for black 16-19 year olds -- still far below the U.S. rates. But many believe the youth unemployment figures are too low to attribute to Boston's booming economy alone. "The Compact didn't exist in the schools six years ago," Jim Darr notes, "so I think that something else has happened in terms of connecting an alienated, primarily poor urban population to the major institutions in the city."

The Compact and the School Department

At the end of the 1985 school year, Superintendent Spillane departed and the Compact's managers faced three issues that were critical for the program's future in the school department. They had to develop a

commitment to school improvement within the Boston Public School's (BPS) curriculum and instruction division, a group that had not yet been involved in Compact activities. Two years earlier, the Compact staff, who reported directly to the superintendent, had introduced the high schools to a school-wide planning process without BPS help. Now it was time to move on to the more politically sensitive and technically demanding work of instructional improvement that couldn't be done without support from the school department.

The Compact's managers also had to sell the Compact and its school improvement agreement to incoming superintendent Laval S. Wilson, who was hired from Rochester, N.Y. While it was unlikely that Wilson would be unenthusiastic about business support, it was less clear that the Compact would be high on his agenda or that he would keep pressure on the high schools to continue improvement efforts. The Compact's managers worried about the loss of momentum in the schools and a shift in district priorities.

Finally, the Compact's managers were concerned about the increasingly intrusive behavior of the Boston School Committee and its effect on district management. The newly enlarged thirteen member Committee, and their 26 salaried staff assistants were deeply involved in day to day district operations. Mr. Spillane had denounced the School Committee for compromising his authority and finally driving him out, and the Compact's managers wanted to avoid a repeat of that situation. As the Compact concluded its third year, the business community's commitment to the schools was firmly established. But the district administration had yet to

make a comparable commitment by ensuring policy and management stability and providing the technical support that the Compact needed.

The Compact and School Improvement

The Compact planners' strategy for improving the high schools was a school-based planning process based on the ideas of the late Ron Edmonds about how to improve urban schools.(7) Edmonds' model, which had gained a considerable national following since it was introduced in 1979, called for faculty-wide participation in identifying school problems, developing and carrying out plans for addressing them, and assessing progress. "Our 'Ron Edmonds' methodology was to treat each school as if it were a destroyer in the navy, where the school is the unit of analysis and the headmaster is hopefully an aggressive educational leader, with a great deal of discussion going on among teachers about how to use resources to make sure that every child makes substantial educational progress," Bill Spring reported.

The program was launched in the summer of 1983, when Superintendent Spillane required the high school headmasters and two staff to attend a week-long meeting organized by the Compact to introduce them to effective schools ideas and start them working on plans for applying the ideas in their schools. During the academic year, the Compact office gave each school $2,500 dollars, some help, and an additional staff person to orchestrate the effort. But the Compact's managers knew that a serious drive to upgrade education quality would require substantial amounts of in-service training for every principal and teacher in the high schools. To do this, the Compact needed support from key BPS staff, which currently was missing.

Robert Schwartz, executive director of the Compact at the time, reasoned that its support problems in part stemmed from its unique position, attached to the superintendent's office but independent of the school department bureaucracy. "My feeling was that the school improvement piece of the Compact was not going to happen when the major resources for assisting schools were all elsewhere in the department...Our little four person unit in the superintendent's office was well staffed to start a school-level planning process, but the question was how to get schools the help they need to really deal with basic skills problems...We didn't have the right people or anything like the necessary horses in the Compact office," Schwartz said. "The question became how to get the system to internalize responsibility for making sure that internal resources, not just outside resources, got targeted on something that had to be led by the system, by the deputy superintendent of curriculum and instruction. That's where the resources needed to be."

Schwartz gambled that the Compact's school improvement program had a better chance if the Compact office were moved into the school department. He lobbied successfully for the merger, but it was no sooner accomplished than Superintendent Spillane left Boston. His successor cut positions and reorganized the department that housed the Compact. But the eleven staff in the new Office of School Assistance were too busy helping the district's 124 schools implement new state mandates to provide assistance the Compact needed. In addition, the head of the high school assistance team was an ex-headmaster who didn't believe in pushing high schools.

Musing on how the Compact had been checkmated by the school department after working outside it effectively for several years, Al McMahill, former

staff director of the Compact, recalled that "all of our early wars were with the curriculum and instruction people. Now that we're inside the department, they are the new gatekeepers, denying us access and undercutting our effectiveness." McMahill believed that in one brief year, the work of the Compact in the schools had been "decimated."

So the Compact's school improvement program was abandoned, for all intents and purposes -- at least for the time being. The lack of leadership in the school department contributed to the setback. Superintendent Spillane had been unwilling or unable to press the curriculum and instruction division to support the Compact. Then, when the Compact was folded into the school department, it was unable to generate from within the support that it couldn't develop as an external program. Superintendent Wilson's reorganization of the school assistance unit did nothing to solve the Compact's problems. The lack of support was centered two layers down in the bureaucracy, and the superintendent's reach did not easily extend that far.

The high schools were not enthusiastic either. The headmasters were hostile to the Compact's school improvement plan, but participated initially because it was the superintendent's priority; three or four Compact staff worked exclusively as advocates for the high schools; and discretionary resources were available. But most of the headmasters did not believe their schools needed a school improvement program. They thought that more money would solve some of their problems and the others couldn't be solved. Bill Spring observed that "most urban educators believe that the problems of kids who are far behind are virtually

insolvable given the current equation of resources and circumstances. It's very, very hard to change that attitude."

Yet another obstacle to the Compact's school improvement agenda was insufficient capacity to help the schools and the unavailability of assistance through the school department. The Compact's ability to provide resources was the sole carrot it could offer to maintain the schools' interest in planning. But without offering intensive, technical assistance and training, the Compact couldn't persuade even the interested headmasters to undertake comprehensive, school-wide change. A few determined headmasters tried without outside help and by most accounts were making progress. But most needed to be enticed with more than the Compact could offer.

Finally, Superintendent Laval S. Wilson did not move to shore up the Compact's school improvement program after his arrival in August 1985. A year later, Jim Darr assessed the program's status: "In the last year, the school improvement effort has ground to a halt. Under Spillane, it only really got started." Bob Schwartz reflected that "abolishing the old Compact office and consolidating it into the school department was a gamble I thought was worth taking at the time. It turned out not to have worked."

The Superintendent and School Improvement

Laval S. Wilson's appointment to the superintendency pleased the business community and the Compact's managers. They liked Wilson's low key manner and interest in management details and had high hopes that he would continue Mr. Spillane's efforts to upgrade district management and school quality. But it quickly became apparent that although Wilson was indeed a "hands on" manager, he was inclined to follow his own counsel without

taking advice from inside or outside the system. His centrist approach to management did not sit well with the School Committee or with various other groups that had grown accustomed to participating in the decision-making process. During his first year in office, as Mr. Wilson moved to streamline the school department and bring its budget in line with political reality, major conflicts erupted, first over a school bus drivers' strike, then over student subway passes, proposed high school closings, and the perennial personnel issues -- this time Wilson's dismissal of six of the nine district superintendents after their evaluations of building principals were unrealistically favorable. The superintendent's first rocky year left little time to focus on school improvement.

The Compact's managers were eager to move the issue of school quality up on the Superintendent's agenda, and so regrouped their efforts around the high school drop-out rate, which had risen to 43%. Using this bad news to galvanize attention, the Compact group drafted a drop-out plan for the district and held a major conference in May 1986 sponsored by the Committee for Economic Development of New York and the State Street Bank and Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. Superintendent Wilson unveiled the Compact's dropout proposal at the conference; it called for more basic skills, more alternative programs, more community agencies involved with the schools. The plan proposed to expand existing programs rather than to launch new ones or try to strengthen the skills of teachers already in the schools.

Superintendent Wilson's own plans for improving Boston's schools centered on a middle school dropout prevention program, Project Promise,

that required an extended school day and Saturday classes for students performing below grade level -- those at greatest risk of leaving school. He also started a long-range planning effort -- a district wide process much like what the Compact had hoped to do in each school.

Neither of these projects was greeted with much enthusiasm in Boston. The teachers union protested the overtime requirement for teachers in the Project Promise schools. Teachers and others also protested that research consistently indicated that unsuccessful students do not improve by spending more time in school. The long-range planning effort was even more controversial. In fall 1986, the administration convened 16 task forces comprised of 20 or so teachers, administrators, business, university and community representatives that analyzed district problems and proposed corrective plans in the areas of: adolescence; at-risk students; counseling and guidance; curriculum support; early childhood programs; facilities; instructional materials; mathematics; middle and high school programs; parent and community support; professional development of teachers and administrators; reading; safe and orderly school environments; special education, bilingual and vocational/occupational/career education; student assignment process; and writing. Task force plans were submitted to the superintendent in January 1987, and in May, he forwarded 480 recommendations, called "The Boston Education Plan", to the School Committee for approval.

The planning process and the Education Plan were greeted in the city with everything from scorn to ridicule to studied explanations as to why it wouldn't help the schools. Some complained that because the Plan covered everything in the school system it was no plan at all, just a wish list.

Others doubted that the 16 areas were equally important. Yet other people believed that the Plan was so comprehensive that no one could really be held accountable. Others said that all of this had been done before to no avail by other Boston superintendents and that the whole process was dreadfully out of step with current ideas about how to improve urban schools. A BPS insider said "I don't have real confidence that the Superintendent knows where he wants to go with the schools."

Wilson's approach to education improvement differed from what many in Boston, including the Compact's managers, wanted him to do. They wanted him to continue the ideas that Spillane had introduced, to give the schools more responsibility, more control, and to hold them accountable for results. In their view, the district's role was to provide schools with performance data, assistance and clear criteria against which school performance would be measured. But the Compact's "navy destroyer" approach to school improvement differed sharply from Wilson's belief that improvement standards and policies should be made in the central office and passed down to the schools. As a long-time veteran of the system, deputy superintendent Jim Walch, described it, "Spillane believed in the concepts of school-based management and school-based planning. For him, these things worked. Wilson's philosophy is very centralized. He sometimes wonders why anyone would even consider asking headmasters for input because the central office has control of the bulk of important data needed to make most decisions."

Wilson's ideas were not well received in Boston, but they were not strange to American education. Strong central control and top-down policymaking practices had shaped the management of school districts for

nearly fifty years, and continue to drive school administration in most big cities. But in the past two decades these ideas had given way to the notion of decentralized power with greater responsibility for education shifted to building administrators and their faculties. These newer ideas owed much to participatory management theories newly arrived to education and to a greater understanding of how little control top managers in public organizations had over work carried out further down in the system. The ideas were also compatible with what had become the revolving door character of the urban superintendency with its accompanying shifts in district policies and programs. A change at the top every few years had helped to undermine the superintendent's authority, as staff learned that the steady business of running the schools was the work of those who spent their careers in the system. Participatory management was appealing because it proposed to recognize that responsibility.

The Compact's managers hoped these new ideas would reform Boston's schools. But several problems intruded. For one thing, the headmasters didn't see a need for much more than cosmetic change in their schools and they had no intention of pushing serious change without some incentive. Mr. Spillane had provided one incentive by reassigning half the headmasters, but even that didn't stir up a firestorm of improvement in the high schools. Moreover, the lack of principal and teacher accountability in the system made it impossible to require changes. The Compact wanted to instigate change through staff retraining, but lacked expertise and support from the teachers union absent overtime pay or other adjustments.

Finally, a number of local educators doubted that participatory decision-making, for all of its currency, would work in the culture of the

Boston school system. Its staff, after all, had been trained under the bad old ideas not the new ones; staff expected to be told what to do. Yohel Camayd-Freixas, district research and evaluation director, described the system as an "autocratic, hierarchical organization where everyone salutes. That's the way people understand their work. You can only bring about change by ordering people to do it." Robert Sperber observed that after Mr. Spillane handed in his resignation, the bureaucracy came to a screeching halt. "Large bureaucracies don't do anything if they're not pushed; all operations become idle, and Boston is no different."

So school improvement has not made much progress in Boston. Problems derailed the Compact's program in less than two years, before it was really up and running, and for the next two and a half years, little central direction guided improvement work in Boston's schools. Still, the district made progress on the achievement test and attendance goals it agreed to meet in signing the business agreement of the Boston Compact in September 1982. The school department initially agreed to raise student attendance by five percent per year, and since 1983, attendance rates in the high schools have gone up from 80.7% to 83.1% in the 1986-87 school year. High school student performance on the Metropolitan Achievement Test, a standardized test in reading and math, rose from a median percentile of 38% and 35% in reading and math respectively in 1983 to 45% and 47% in 1985. Then, in 1986, the median percentiles for grades nine through twelve dropped to 41% in reading and 38% in math -- a decline that was partly due to the introduction of a new version of the test and a renorming of test results. The following year, 1987, median percentiles rose to 42% in reading and to 44% in math.(8)

The high school drop-out rate either steadily worsened over the past five years or declined slightly in 1987, depending on how one calculates the rate. Boston uses a reliable method of following grade cohorts for five years trying to determine what happened to students who left school. Calculated this way, the drop-out rate for the 1982 graduating class, between grade nine when it entered high school and grade twelve when it graduated, plus an extra year to allow lagging students to catch up, was 36%. The dropout rate for the next year's class rose to 38%, rose again to 41% for the class of '84 and again to 43% for the class of 1985. The cohort dropout rate for the class of 1986, which was released in September 1987, is up to 46%. When the school dropout rate is based on annual September-June enrollment figures, the formula most urban districts use, Boston's rate was 13.9% in 1987, down by 1.8% over the previous year. This, according to the Office of Research and Development, "compares favorably with the same figures for the past four years."(9)

School Improvement and School Governance

As of September 1987, some things had settled down in the district. A new governance plan that stripped the School Committee of control over personnel decisions was in place and the School Committee had approved a 1987 school budget of $327.2 million. It included $3.1 to begin implementing Wilson's Boston Education Plan, which had a five year $74 million price tag. The Boston business community was widely credited with having mobilized the Mayor's office and the City Council behind the new proposals. Some people hope that business will next turn its attention to teaching and learning in the schools. Bob Schwartz recalled that "the whole concept of the Compact was that at some point, (business) leaders

would ask 'what is the plan, and is it really comprehensive enough, and is there a serious improvement strategy?' ... Most of them -- and rightly so-- stop well short of feeling comfortable about going to the Superintendent and saying 'Show us your plan'." "We don't get involved directly," William Edgerly said, "If you've got a good superintendent, you give him authority to do his job. If he has a problem, we help. ... But we want the professionals to deal with the issues."

The Compact in the Schools: School Improvement and Business Involvement

During the Compact's first two years, there was evidence that some high schools were changing, that the Compact was beginning to influence the way some schools addressed teaching and learning classrooms.(10) For the first time in memory, schools were pressured by the superintendent's office to develop specific school improvement plans and given money and two staff to help: a development officer who served as liaison with businesses and universities, and a career specialist who was a PIC employee assigned to find jobs and prepare students for school year, summer, and post-graduation work. With this amount of assistance and district pressure, it seemed that the Compact needed only time to become a recognized mechanism for school improvement.

Today, four years later, the excitement that surrounded the Boston Compact as a lever for school reform has disappeared. This view is held by faculty at two Boston high schools that have made sizeable improvements in recent years.

The Compact at Brighton and English High Schools

Juliette Johnson became principal of Brighton High School five years ago, full of ideas for improving staff morale, student accountability, doing something about the "terrible physical plant" and improving relations with parents, businesses and higher education. Johnson saw the possibilities for help through the Compact and used it to begin an ambitious slate of improvements. "Their assistance provided a tremendous amount of support for me. I had goals, but didn't know how to attack them. They gave me many opportunities to go to conferences and attend training sessions." Four years later, Johnson spoke as if the Compact was no longer there: "The old school improvement team used to help with projects on improvement and evaluation. It's not that we can't ask for that (now), but you can't get the same kind of help. They're part of the bureaucracy and the people who are staffing that office don't have the skills...Two years ago, I knew the Compact's phone number by heart. But no Compact people have been here in two years. I don't know who they are."

Still, Brighton has made progress building on programs the Compact helped launch. Attendance and achievement rates have risen; the school has been spruced up; a literacy committee is developing a cross-departmental writing program. In addition, reading teacher Jackie Quinn has helped science and math faculty learn to teach reading in their courses. A new "mentor program" matches students with teachers or business partner employees, who serve as "big brothers/sisters". Johnson credits the Compact with getting such projects started, but wishes there were help to expand them throughout the school.

Like their counterparts at Brighton, English High faculty now see the Compact as uninvolved in direct school improvement activity. Susan Ohmsberg, assistant headmaster, said that "in the first year and a half of the Compact, you could really tell what schools were doing. It was a priority in the system... Now it's just not as visible." Still, like Brighton High, English has forged ahead with a number of improvement activities -- which is impressive considering its recent reputation as one of Boston's worst high schools. When Mr. Spillane appointed Sid Smith headmaster and told him to "go in and turn things around", Smith pushed staff to develop a school "mission" and supporting policies. Improved curriculum became one school goal and resulted in a streamlined list of course offerings with industrial arts and most electives eliminated. The reason for this, Smith says, was that "kids weren't literate. They couldn't read, write, speak well; they couldn't communicate." Literacy was thus the school's second goal. The third objective was dropout prevention, which the school addressed through the Compact Ventures Program, co-sponsored by the Compact and the Boston PIC, and now operating in 10 of the city's 17 high schools. The program clusters small groups of students along with math, English and social studies teachers in hopes of providing "at-risk" youngsters with more personal and academic attention. As at Brighton, the principal at English High used ideas that the Compact promoted to develop purpose and priorities in his school.

In the past few years, then, secondary school improvement in Boston has been largely a building driven effort. More than anything else, school staff view the Compact as a jobs program and a way of involving businesses in the schools. In the words of one administrator, "The Compact as a jobs

program is alive and well...the Compact as School Improvement is dead." James Carridonio, Director of Vocational Education for the Boston Schools and an early Compact planner, observed that "[The Compact] has gotten a little more sophisticated and has grown substantially. But it's almost like...a big placement agency... For the impact it might have had on the schools, all we've had is a lot of rhetoric around that. It's fallen into arrears, as we might say."

This view of the Compact is shared by teachers. One at English High said that "when I hear Compact, I think of those students who are graduating and going into either full-time work, college or part-time work...that's what the Compact was designed for. Business promised that if we make these students job ready and they graduate, then [business] will provide jobs for them." These impressions point to a prevailing perception in the schools that the Compact is a program that generates resources and doesn't ask much in return. The momentum it once created around school improvement and accountability is gone: "There has been a regression to the mean," concluded one administrator. But such observations have not inhibited the business community's work with schools; business-education "pairings" remain strong as businesses have become more involved with individual schools providing a host of new benefits.

Business Involvement in the Schools: Jobs, Financial Aid & Assistance

While the Boston Compact has stimulated a potpourri of business roles in the public schools, business has set some parameters around what it will do, preferring not to provide direct dollars to the schools, and avoiding matters of curriculum and instruction. What most businesses do provide is student jobs, college counseling and "last dollar" financial aid through

the ACCESS Program, and an array of pro bono gifts and services that businesses traditionally have given to schools.

All of the Compact jobs programs are staffed by PIC personnel called "career specialists" who find jobs and work with students on job-readiness skills, resumes, mock interviews, and in general, offer advice for successfully navigating the workplace. Career specialists enjoy a good deal of autonomy in their work, as it varies according to school and student preferences and available jobs. They get broad guidance from the PIC office and then develop program models and rules that they think best for their schools. For example, the English High career specialist job placement requirement is "reasonable grades", although she has no grade cut-offs because "in some cases students with D's may be doing the best they can." The Career Specialist at Brighton requires job seekers to obtain recommendations from teachers, and claims that this has helped cement faculty support for the program. Still, she is cautious about finding work for everyone, as some students are not responsible enough to hold a job.

The new ACCESS program got under way in 1986 with five full-time advisors who visit all Boston high schools one or two days per week to counsel seniors through the labyrinth of college admissions and financial aid. ACCESS also has a "Scholar's Program", which offers further counseling to Boston graduates once they are in college. ACCESS counselors provide information and guidance concerning registration, work-study opportunities and advice on daily challenges such as how to efficiently balance time and finances and manage the new social demands of college. ACCESS has provided last dollar scholarships to 240 students across the

system. In 1986, the average award was $533, ranging from a low of $200 to a high of $1200.

In addition to jobs and the ACCESS program, businesses offer schools an array of assistance. Brighton High, paired with Honeywell, Inc., received a grant for refurbishing, a project aptly named, "Brighten Brighton". This project began when a Honeywell business representative saw first hand that the school was in terrible disrepair and urged the company to fund a large-scale cleaning, painting, and recarpeting of the building. Honeywell also has donated computers for instruction and contributed pro-bono public relations help. Honeywell's activity at Brighton encouraged a near-by hospital to offer part-time jobs and the neighborhood Board of Trade is now promoting the school mentor program to its 150 member association.

English High School receives considerable assistance from its business partner, the John Hancock Insurance Company. Every Tuesday thirty Hancock employees spend their lunch hour tutoring students. A mentoring program pairs fifty English High seniors with Hancock employees (as well as Boston University & Simmons College personnel) who serve as someone to talk to. Hancock personnel also organized an SAT preparation course and one-on-one SAT tutoring for seniors and juniors; it also hosts numerous social functions, including a staff Christmas party and a year-end recognition banquet for school and Hancock staff. Hancock donates the time of various corporate speakers, offers tours of their facilities and gives the school desks, chairs and media equipment. They also provide consultants and last year loaned the school an architect to assist in planning a library renovation. Boston's school-business pairings have produced benefits such

as these for many schools, and have helped business learn that "people in schools are hard-working and sensitive", as one business mentor reported.

Conclusions

The Compact was based on a simple idea -- that if every student was assured a job after graduation, youngsters would remain in school, teachers would work harder to teach them, and the district would launch efforts to improve the quality of education in the high schools. The idea may not yet have been tested; five to eight years is often cited as the minimum needed for school change to take hold.(11) But in five years, job assurances have neither reduced the dropout rate nor have district initiatives led to substantive improvements in the high schools. Although there are signs that the annual dropout rate may be stabilizing, the cohort dropout rate continues to rise: students who were in the eighth grade when the Compact began dropped out in greater proportions than their counterparts five years earlier. Over this time, the district made little progress toward improving the schools. Two superintendents grappled with personnel and management issues and recent changes in school governance have increased the superintendent's authority. But the district has yet to initiate programs that will change teaching and learning in the schools.

Our analysis has attempted to explain why the Compact thus far has not succeeded as a school improvement program while exceeding even optimists' dreams as a youth employment program that could serve most everyone. The Boston business community was far more successful in meeting its Compact goals because it worked with several advantages that the school department lacked: participation incentives, the resources and know-how for meeting goals that were clear, and stability in both leadership and program

management. The business community was able to pursue its objectives unencumbered by obstacles well known to obstruct change in school departments: the inability to hire and fire, lack of agreement on goals, and middle managers that are only loosely connected -- and thus only loosely accountable -- to top management. Working under favorable circumstances, business easily outperformed the school department.

The biggest business incentive, of course, was Boston's flourishing economy and demand for labor, which underscored the educational deficiencies of the school system. Over the past two decades, Boston's schools had became host to the multiply disadvantaged, those hardest to qualify for jobs available in Boston's new service economy. The district's difficulty and seeming indifference to preparing these students to enter the work force created a particular incentive for business to get involved in education. At the same time, the Reagan administration's success in promoting its New Federalism agenda made it respectable if not obligatory for U.S. corporations to take an active role in public affairs, most prominently the public schools.

The PIC's effectiveness as the business community's liaison with the school department was another incentive. The success of the Compact's business agreement was largely the work of the PIC, a private, non-profit, mostly federally-funded organization that had great flexibility to carry out its Compact mandate. The PIC operated with its business sponsors' full support. Moreover, the PIC's hand-picked staff operated under full employment conditions, and with salary incentives, to match eager employers to equally eager youth -- serving as "the business community's Snelling & Snelling," as one teacher described it. What PIC staff needed to do -- the

know-how necessary to make the business agreement work -- was no mystery. The business community's Compact goals were strictly numerical -- matching jobs and students -- and success was measured and rewarded on that basis. Questions about the quality of jobs provided, what student learned at work, and whether their work experiences might have enduring value were not mentioned.

Finally, the business agreement benefited from continuity in CEO and PIC leadership. The PIC board's membership changed during the Compact's first five years, but William Edgerly, founding chair of the PIC and one of Boston's most highly regarded CEO's, continued to promote the PIC's education agenda. James Darr, executive director of the PIC and William Spring, vice president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, both of whom helped to design the original Compact agreement, remained in their positions to play key roles in managing the implementation of the business agreement and its later expansion to include programs for pre and post high school students.(12)

On the education side of the Compact, the school department worked with none of the advantages that worked so well for business. For one thing, the Compact had to contend with political battles and personnel changes that undermined school improvement before it barely had started and that shifted the district's focus to other things. Robert Spillane's departure was a serious blow to the Compact's plans for decentralized school reform. The School Committee, Compact and business leaders, and many other school constituents supported Spillane's school-based change programs. But oddly enough, they did not search for similar or compatible ideas among potential successors. The Committee went on to select someone

whose reform ideas were dramatically different from those that had played well in Boston.

In the ensuing months, the Compact's executive director Robert Schwartz was able to convince Laval Wilson of the Compact's importance as a political strategy. But he was unable to develop Wilson's support for its school-based improvement program. A year after Wilson's arrival in 1985, Schwartz left the Boston School Department to become Massachusetts' Governor Michael Dukakis's chief education advisor, and Al McMahill left to promote a state-wide Compact program. Ted Dooley, who had been Darr's assistant at the PIC, took Schwartz's position in the school department. After the Compact's first four years, then, its education staff had changed, leaving no one to push for improvements in the schools. The original "high school advocates" had all departed before much of substance had been accomplished.

Participation incentives were also in short supply. For the first three years, Compact staff had modest resources and some assistance to offer schools for planning. But their group was small and lacked curriculum and instruction expertise. Moreover, the district office and most of the high schools were not enthusiastic about the Compact's school improvement plans. The Compact's designers had expected resistance, but in bypassing district staff and going directly to the schools, they left the Compact without the internal institutional support it ultimately needed. One irony is that the Compact's expressed ideal of a bottom-up, participatory, consensus-building reform strategy failed partly because the program was launched without district office and school input to the decision. The program was introduced by superintendent directive, which

practically guaranteed the difficulties it soon encountered. Since most principals didn't see a need for instructional change, the Compact didn't try to influence that vision, and the superintendent lacked the authority to require change, the Compact's school improvement program could not be implemented.

This is not to say that staff participation and continuity in leadership would have produced a happy ending to this story. For one thing, the Compact's managers worked without an explicit theory of how students engage in learning and what happens when they do. The Compact's improvement program focused only on school "processes" -- getting staff to talk to each other, to work on joint projects, to build consensus around common goals. The program invoked no new requirements for the knowledge and skill that educators would employ in classrooms, and it left the existing authority structure of schools in place. It should come as no surprise that process solutions invoked in the absence of attention to knowledge, skill and authority produced little in the way of institutional change or improvements in teaching and learning.(13)

Even if an instructional improvement program based on sound learning theory had been jointly selected with teachers, help with implementation would have been hard to get from the school department. Except for a brief time in the mid 70s during the early years of the desegregation order, in-service training on instruction and curriculum has not been a district priority; principals and supervisors are expected to take care of teaching problems. The district's curriculum and instruction division satisfies a district need to appear engaged in professional, technical improvement. But in fact, the division serves as a reserve pool for future

building administrators rather than a fountain of expertise on teaching methods.(14) The Compact staff proposed to solve the assistance problem by calling on local colleges and universities, using district personnel to broker help and manage the training programs. But BPS curriculum and instructional personnel were not enthusiastic about being replaced, in effect, by college faculty.

Finally, we question whether leadership in the superintendent's office would have solved the Compact's problems. Stability would have enabled the Compact to build support for a new instructional program, but implementing it in the face of the district's deep resistance to change would have been highly problematic. Like most bureaucracies, the BPS is adept at absorbing new programs and then ignoring decisions, deflecting orders, domesticating new practices and in the end, sabotaging programs that propose to interrupt the prevailing norms and practices of the organizations.(15) In joining the Compact, the business community, in effect, proposed to trade jobs for school improvement. The system's response, not surprisingly, was "thanks very much for the jobs."(16)

Leadership for change was more effective in individual buildings, where principals used resources and assistance from the Compact and from business partners to advance their own improvement agenda. As we have seen at Brighton and English High Schools, some of this continues. But the elimination of Compact staff positions in some high schools, cutbacks in resources and transfers of good principals to other schools have interrupted building initiated programs. Still, for the past two or three years, when school improvement occurred, it was a building-driven effort.

Our analysis of the Boston Compact raises other questions about school-based management and improvement in Boston and perhaps other cities. The current move to devolve decision-making to schools assumes that teachers want more responsibility for school management -- an assumption for which we found little evidence in Boston.(17) Some teachers liked the idea in theory, but not as a practical matter without adjustments in their workloads, class schedules or other benefits.(18) In the Compact's discussions about giving more responsibility to schools, the organizational and structural characteristics of teaching never came up, which may help to explain why the program was not a big hit in the high schools. Other cities such as Pittsburgh, Atlanta and Hartford have made serious attempts to address instructional improvement without attention to such structural issues as class size and the organization of teachers' work. Thus far, there are few successful public school models to guide new efforts in those directions.(19)

We also question whether it makes sense to try to improve public schools by short circuiting the district office as school-based programs often try to do. Stymied by immobile bureaucracies, strong bargaining contracts, and revolving door superintendents accompanied by new programs that come and go, bypassing the central office may seem an attractive alternative. School reformers recently have turned to external sources of political support for school change, such as the business community, the courts, or state legislatures and governors' offices, and some of their interventions have pushed programs ahead. But helpful as this may be at times, in the long run educators cannot avoid confronting the difficulties caused by district offices and school committees whose resource and policy

decisions ultimately take precedence over decisions made by headmasters and teachers in the schools.

In Boston, the Compact's designers turned to the business community for help, which it offered in abundance: jobs for most students and graduates who wanted one; last dollar scholarships and counseling for college attendance; grants to support a variety of school programs and teacher fellowships; assistance through the school-business pairings; and political support for district management reform. But leaders in the business community are clear about their unwillingness to become involved in decisions that effect teaching and learning in the schools. Many U.S. cities including Boston have discovered that the federal and state courts are limited in what they can do to improve education quality; the same may apply to the business community. While it will provide leadership, resources, moral support and political pressure, in the final analysis business believes that education professionals are responsible for policies that will improve the schools.

Footnotes

1. Appendix A provides a more complete description of the Boston Compact agreements.

2. Interested readers are referred to an account of the Compact's first three years, "After the Signing: The Boston Compact 1983-1985 by E. Farrar and A. Cipollone in American Business and the Public Schools, M. Levine and J. Tractenberg, eds., (1988) New York: Teachers' College Press, pp. 89-120.

3. This study of the Boston Compact does not provide an account of the Compact's Boston Higher Education Partnership and the agreement with the Trades Union Council. The contributions of those partners have been considerable, particularly those of the higher education community. Interested readers are referred to "A Decade of Commitment: School-College Collaboration in Boston: 1975-1985," an undated publication of the Boston Higher Education Partnership, Boston University.

4. These statistics are taken from various unpublished Boston Public School documents and from "Boston Dropouts: Planning a Community Response," May 1986.

5. This analysis was conducted by Professor Andrew Sum, Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University and is reported in Spring, W.J., "Youth Unemployment and the Transition from School to Work", New England Economic Review, March/April 1987, pp.3-16.

6. Spring, op.cit., p.5.

7. Edmonds, Ronald. "Effective Schools for the Urban Poor." Educational Leadership. 37(1979): 15-27.

8. These figures are reported in BPS annual reports of secondary school attendance and student achievement on the Metropolitan Achievement Test, 1983-1987.

9. Annual BPS reports on student dropouts, 1982-1986 and Memo to Superintendent Laval Wilson from Dr. Yohel Camayd-Freixas, "1987 Dropout Study," September 3, 1987.

10. Farrar, E. & Cipollone, A. op. cit., pp. 106-112.

11. See for example, Huberman A. M. and Miles, M. D., Innovations Up Close. (1984) New York: Plenum.

12. Jim Darr resigned from the PIC in July 1987 to join the State Street Bank as vice president.

13. Cuban, L. "Transforming the Frog into a Prince: Effective Schools Research, Policy and Practice at the District Level". Harvard Educational Review 54(1974).

14. For an extended discussion of the role such departments play in education organizations see Meyer, J. W. and Rowan, B. "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony." in Meyer, J. W. and Scott, W. R., eds., Organizational Environments: Ritual and Rationality. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983.

15. Weick, K. "Educational Organizations as Loosely Coupled Systems. Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol. 23, December, 1978.

16. Richard Elmore pointed this out, noting that bureaucratic organizations tend to confront changes in very literal ways.

17. "A Nation Prepared: Teaching for the 21st Century." Report on the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy. New York: The Carnegie Corporation, 1986.

18. Farrar, E. "Environmental Contexts and the Implementation of Teacher and School Based Reforms: Competing Interests." Unpublished paper, SUNY Buffalo, 1988.

19. Dade County, Florida, recently initiated an interesting and extensive restructuring program that turns considerable responsibility, including full control of the school's annual budget allocations, to building principals and faculty.

Appendix A

Boston Compact Agreement

The Boston Compact is a formal agreement between the school department, members of the business community, area colleges and universities and the Boston trades unions to collaborate in providing new education and employment opportunities to the city's public school students. In signing the Compact, the business community agreed to hire 400 June 1983 graduates into permanent jobs and within two more years, to increase that number to 1,000 students if they could meet entry-level requirements. The co-signers also agreed to work closely with the Boston Private Industry Council, a private, federally supported, non-profit organization established in 1979 to explore private sector initiatives in employment training. They were to help the PIC expand from three to six the number of schools participating in the Jobs Collaborative, a school-to-work transition program. Finally, they pledged to recruit, by 1984, 300 companies to participate in a priority hiring program from Boston graduates and to increase the number of summer jobs available for Boston high school students from 750 in 1982 to 1,000 in 1983.

On the education side, the school department made a commitment to reduce both high school absentee and dropout rates by five percent annually. It also agreed to implement increased academic standards, requiring that by 1986, all graduates meet minimum standards in reading and math. The school department also promised a five percent annual increase in the number of students who either took a job or went to college after graduation. In addition, the school department pledged to improve the quality of education provided by the schools.

Within two years after the business-public school agreements were signed, the Compact expanded to include higher education and trades union agreements. The Boston Trades Union Council agreed to set aside five percent of its apprenticeship positions annually for qualified Boston high school graduates. Twenty-five Boston area colleges and schools of higher education agreed to enroll 25% more Boston public school graduates through 1988 and to assist the schools in strengthening their college preparatory curriculum. The colleges also agreed to increase financial aide for local youngsters and to develop support services to help them remain in college.

Method of the Study

The research for this paper was conducted from September 1986 to September 1987 and consisted of formal interviews and informal conversations with individuals in the Boston Private Industry Council and several Boston Corporations: The State Street Bank, The New England Mutual Life Insurance Company, The Bank of Boston, The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, Honeywell Corporation, John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company.

In addition, we interviewed several staff in the Boston School Department's central office, including the superintendent of schools, Laval S. Wilson. We also interviewed a member of the Boston School Committee and the President of the Boston Teachers' Union. We met with former Superintendent Robert Spillane as well.

Research in Boston's English High School and Brighton High School consisted of extensive interviews with the headmasters Sid Smith and Juliette Johnson and nearly a dozen of their staff in each school, including the PIC's career specialist and the Compact's development officer.

Interviews were either tape recorded and transcribed or were recorded in handwritten field notes taken during the interviews. Many, but not all, of the people interviewed are identified by name and title in this paper. Some observations and quotes have been presented without attribution to protect individual's confidentiality when information was provided "off the record" or when the authors were concerned about its sensitivity.

Research for this paper also consisted of reviewing an avalanche of Boston Public Schools and PIC documents and all accounts of school department and related education activities reported in the Boston Globe during the year. The authors are particularly grateful to Alice G. Farrar for providing copies of all Globe education stories over the 12 month period.

We are particularly indebted to Jim Darr, Sid Smith and Juliette Johnson, who provided us with generous amounts of time during the year's research. Ted Dooley and Jeanette Hargroves were particularly helpful in providing formal documents regarding the public schools. Fred Newmann, Richard Elmore, Catherine Cornbleth, Jim Darr and Robert Sperber gave us extensive and very helpful comments on an earlier draft of this report. The analysis of developments in the Boston Compact over the past two years are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the people interviewed or the study's sponsor, the National Center on Effective Secondary Eduction, University of Wisconsin.